



City of New Bedford
Scott W. Lang, Mayor

City of New Bedford
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P R E S S R E L E A S E

New Bedford Kicks Off Community Development Block Grant Week

NEW BEDFORD, MA – New Bedford Mayor Scott W. Lang today invited city residents, community agencies and local officials to officially acknowledge National Community Development Week.

New Bedford's celebration kicked-off this morning at City Hall when the Mayor issued a proclamation that declared this week National Community Development Week in New Bedford. He also outlined other events scheduled throughout the week to including the Sister Rose Gallogly Homeless Service Provider Award Ceremony on March 25, open houses at three Community Development Block Grant funded programs on March 26, and a tour of the Northstar Learning Center in the Acushnet Heights Neighborhood.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program is the largest federal program that provides grants to states, cities and counties to design neighborhood-based approaches to improve the physical, economic, and social conditions in communities throughout the country. In the coming fiscal year, the City of New Bedford will receive \$2.95 million in CDBG funding.

Community Development Week 2008 marks the 34th Anniversary of the CDBG program in operation in the City of New Bedford. The City has received over \$129 million over the course of the past 34 years. The CDBG program has provided a critical revenue source to revitalize New Bedford's neighborhoods and direct assistance to city residents in need.

Some of the programs supported with CDBG funds this current year include:

- Park and playground improvements to Ashley Park.
- Public Facility renovations to the Hillman Street municipal complex, handicap accessibility improvements at Howland Green, Wilkes, and Lawler Libraries, rehabilitation of Market Ministries Shelter, and street and sidewalk improvements in West End neighborhoods.
- Assistance totaling \$518,000 to 27 non-profit and city agencies to carry out public service activities such as: summer youth employment and programming, senior social programs,

immigrant assistance, homeless prevention, social and leisure activities for individuals with disabilities, legal assistance, and art therapy.

- Economic development assistance to attract new businesses to New Bedford, to create new jobs and to expand existing businesses.

“This funding is absolutely critical to improving the quality of life in New Bedford,” said Mayor Lang. “CDBG is targeted to low and moderate income residents and neighborhoods, and over the years thousands of people have been helped directly. But even if you’ve never received a loan or grant, this money has had a positive impact on your life. It’s been used to fix the streets we all drive on and the parks we all play in. It’s been used to rehab the house next door and the store up the street. And it will be used to turn an old gym into a state-of-the-art, all-purpose community center for everyone in the city. We put this money to excellent use, but we could use more of it.”

Patrick Sullivan, Director of the city’s Office of Housing and Community Development concurs. “This program has provided tremendous benefits to the city over the years, and we do a lot with the funding we get. But over the last 5 years, we have lost almost a million dollars of our entitlement. Imagine what that number would be if you adjusted for inflation. In the meantime, the need for the money has only grown. You have to be prudent and creative in the use of these funds, and I think the City has done that.”

The CDBG Program is administered nationally by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and locally by the Office of Housing and Community Development, 608 Pleasant Street, New Bedford. For additional information on the CDBG Program please contact Patrick J. Sullivan, Housing and Community Development Director at 508.979.1500.

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